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Wednesday, October 30, 2013

Michelle Willmers on the state of Open Access: Where are we, what still needs to be done?

One of a series exploring the current state of Open Access (OA), the Q&A below is with Michelle Willmers, Project Manager of the OpenUCT Initiative at the University of Cape Town (UCT) in South Africa.

Michelle Willmers

A former journal publishing manager, Michelle Willmers was drawn to the Open Access movement after witnessing international publishers sweep into South Africa and acquire local journals. They then locked these journals behind paywalls and sought to sell them to local academic institutions at prices most simply could not afford.

For the South African academic community this was a case of bad to worse: Historically South African research has not been published over much in international journals. As such, it has tended to be invisible to the global research community. Now it was in danger of becoming invisible to local researchers as well.

Explaining her journey to OA Willmers says, "It was perhaps less of a case of becoming an OA advocate than having a deep realisation that the local scholarly communication paradigm was broken. The conversation around how to first acknowledge and then address this led in the open access direction."

It was this same broken local context that led to the creation (in 1997) of the South Africa-based service African Journals Online (AJOL) — which Dominique Babini referred to in an earlier Q&A in this series. A local web portal that enables African journals to make their content available online (and so visible on a global basis without the need to cede ownership to international publishers), AJOL currently hosts content from 462 African journals, 150 of which are OA.

And it is this local context that saw the recent launch of SciELO-SA, a South African version of SciELO (Scientific Electronic Library Online), the online open-access publishing platform pioneered in Brazil. SciELO-SA was launched with the content of 26 "free to access and free to publish" South African journals, and it is expected that the service will eventually include around 180 of the country's 300 journals.

**** Please scroll through the introduction if you wish to go direct to the Q&A ****

Number of other factors

To understand the context for OA in South Africa we need to consider a number of other factors as well.

First, OA tends to be viewed as just one component of a larger open movement in South Africa, a movement that also encompasses Open Source software, Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open ELearning. Indeed, OA is not even the key component, but a relatively minor part of this larger context — a reality demonstrated pictorially in a presentation given by OpenUCT at the 2012

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- About Richard Poynder
- Blog: *Open and Shut?*
- The State of Open Access
- The Basement Interviews
- Open Access Interviews
- Essays on Open Access
- Archive

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Interview 2: Richard Poynder
Interview 3: Richard Poynder
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Creative Commons Africa Summit. Here we see OER at the centre of the open movement, with ELearning and OA playing adjunct roles.

This doubtless explains why the University of Cape Town did not sign the 2003 Berlin Declaration in support of OA until 2011, whereas three years earlier it had been a founding signatory of the Cape Town Open Education Declaration) — which calls on stakeholders (including governments, universities and publishers), to "commit to the pursuit and promotion of open education".

It is not hard to see why this is the case. As Willmers explained in a presentation she gave at an Open Access conference held in Cape Town in 2012 (Slides available here):

> *When I am asked how the challenges around scholarly communication are different in Africa it always comes back to the issue of teaching load, because when we speak about the need to develop capacity in African institutions we always come back to the systemic issue of the need for education and the need to support the teaching endeavour.*

To exemplify her point, Willmers reported that when academics in Africa were asked recently why they did research, 82% of respondents in one institution said that they did so *not* in order to boost their prestige, or because their institutions expected them to do it, but in order to enhance and support their teaching activity.

And this surely also explains why, although UCT has no institutional repository, it does have a flourishing Open Content repository — which it describes as a "web portal for accessing open teaching and learning content from UCT".

Specifically the OpenUCT Initiative's mission is:

> ** To make freely available as many as possible of UCT's research, teaching and community-focused scholarly resources to those with internet access*
>
> ** To engage with the higher education openness agenda, from the perspective of the global south*

In short, Willmers told delegates in Cape Town, the boundary between research and teaching is hard to draw in South Africa. "One of the challenges we have faced in the OER initiative is that we eventually ceased to be able to tell the difference between the research and the teaching content. This meant that there were resources that presented an interesting challenge to us, and they were often very popular resources."

All in all, she added, "We had some interesting insights into the nexus between research and teaching."

Less addicted

Second, when thinking about OA in South Africa we need to keep in mind our earlier point that African researchers have not historically published much in international journals. The corollary of this is that — unlike their colleagues in the Global North — they are less addicted to the Thomson Reuters Impact Factor (IF).

This is viewed as a positive thing. Calculated by counting citations in a small subset of international journals, the Journal Impact Factor is now widely viewed as having had a pernicious effect on the research process.

Due to its use in the assessment process, for instance, scholars know that when they apply for promotion or funding the perceived brand value (rank) of the journals in which they have published (measured by the journals' IF) carries greater weight than either their work (the IF measures citations to a journal as a whole, not to particular articles), the number of people that will have access to that journal's contents, or the real-life impact their work has had, or is likely to have. As we shall see, this is problematic.

We could add that since African researchers do not generally publish in international journals (and thus have a lower susceptibility to IF fever) they are more inclined to promote and distribute their work (on an OA basis) using non-traditional channels like blogs, repositories, and web sites.

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Robin Osborne on the state of Open Access: Where are we, what still needs to be done?

One of a series exploring the current state of Open Access

This too is viewed as a positive thing. As Willmers put it to the Cape Town delegates, “I think in our drive to share multiple forms of content we are going into a very exciting open science open/ knowledge space which just isn’t as narrow as grappling over the relative merits of green and gold journal article exchange, although we acknowledge that that is a key global issue.”

And we could note that in responding to my question about the respective merits of Green and Gold OA below, Willmers replies, “If we consider this model as a repository versus formal publisher approach we need to first consider what a different place we are in with respect to both publishing industry and institutional e-infrastructure development.”

She added, “The fixation with Green versus Gold at times seems to function as a distraction from the core challenges of our context — that is, (a) how do we start to build institutional capacity and mechanisms for regional collaboration so that we can capture, curate and share the knowledge that is being produced in our universities; and (b) how do we stimulate discussion at national level to address sustainable funding mechanisms and a strategic policy approach to scholarly communication. We need significant investment in both formal and institutional publishing efforts; both are to be supported.”

This suggests to me that when Willmers talks about repositories and institutional publishing efforts she does not have in mind the model of Green OA assumed in the developed world — where researchers publish in traditional subscription journals and then make copies of their papers freely available in their institutional repositories.

It also suggests that we could see a future in Africa where the repository emerges as a publishing platform in its own right (rather than an archival service) — a model ideally suited to an environment in which non-traditional publishing channels and social media are increasingly used to share research.

In any case, we must doubt that many researchers in the Global South are currently able (or willing) to pay up to $3,000 per paper to publish in a Gold or Hybrid OA journal (as international commercial publishers expect).

It was perhaps with such thoughts in mind that Willmers suggested to delegates in Cape Town that the distinctive characteristics of the research environment in the Global South might see the developing world “leapfrog” over some of the entrenched issues that currently bog down discussions of OA in the developed world.

Incentivising researchers

In contrasting the differing research environments and practices of the developed and the developing world we are encouraged to ask a fundamental question: What is the purpose of doing research? Is the end game simply to provide employment and a career path for researchers, or is it to serve the needs of the citizens who fund it, and who pay the salaries of the scientists who conduct it? Alternatively, is the ultimate purpose to serve mankind at large, regardless of who funds any particular piece of research?

In an ideal world, of course, research would aim to do all these things. Today, however, many believe that the system that has emerged in the developed world has lost sight of the end game.

Why do we say this? Because there is growing evidence that obeisance to hierarchical “journal ranking” (and the impact factor that sustains that ranking) is having an increasingly negative impact on research quality.

In a paper published earlier this year in the journal Frontiers in Human Neuroscience, for instance, Björn Brembs (interviewed earlier in this series) and colleagues examined what they call “the unintended consequences of journal rank”.

Aside from the way in which “iterations of submissions and rejections cascading down the hierarchy of journal rank” unnecessarily lengthens the time it takes for research results to be shared with (and so perhaps benefit) the world, and aside from the fact that the journal hierarchy allows prestigious journals to withstand calls for Open Access (while constantly raising the paywalls that separate researcher from research), Brembs *et al*. demonstrate that journal rank co-occurs with (and likely causes) undesirable, and possibly dangerous, phenomena

(OA), the Q&A below is with Robin Osborne , Professor of Ancient History a...

The OA Interviews: Frances Pinter

In 2012 serial entrepreneur Frances Pinter founded a new company called Knowledge Unlatched (KU). The goal, she explained in 2013, was ...

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2020 (4)
2019 (7)
2018 (20)
2017 (18)
2016 (14)
2015 (18)
2014 (13)
2013 (32)
December (1)
November (1)
October (4)
Michelle Willmers on the state of Open Access: Whe...
Let’s be open about Open Access
Elsevier’s Philippe Terheggen on the state of Open...
Media research analyst at Exane BNP Paribas Sami K...
September (5)
August (2)
July (9)
June (2)
May (2)
April (1)
March (2)
February (2)
January (1)
2012 (43)
2011 (22)
2010 (20)
2009 (22)
2008 (14)
2007 (9)
2006 (27)
2005 (31)
2004 (2)

such as the increase in article retractions we are currently witnessing, the so-called "decline effect" and "publication bias".

This leads the paper's authors to conclude that journal rank (and its use in the assessment of researchers) may have turned the research process into more of a marketing exercise than an effective mechanism for generating useful/valuable research, and then sharing the results of that research in an optimal way.

As they put it, "It is conceivable that, for the last few decades, research institutions world-wide may have been hiring and promoting scientists who excel at marketing their work to top journals, but who are not necessarily equally good at conducting their research. Conversely, these institutions may have purged excellent scientists from their ranks, whose marketing skills did not meet institutional requirements."

They add, "If this interpretation of the data is correct, a generation of excellent marketers (possibly, but not necessarily, also excellent scientists) now serve as the leading figures and role models of the scientific enterprise, constituting another potentially major contributing factor to the rise in retractions."

The key point would seem to be that the Impact Factor, and the journal ranking based on it, is having a negative effect, *not just* on the quality of the papers being published *but also* on the quality of the underlying research process.

Such concerns must have particular resonance in the context of the Global South, where the need to improve food security and health, and develop essential new technologies, is most pressing.

Leaving aside the concerns raised by Brembs *et al.*, the traditional journal may in any case no longer be an appropriate publishing vehicle in the age of the Internet, particularly in the context of the developing world where it is vital that important evidence-based policy decisions are taken as quickly as possible.

As Willmers put it in her Cape Town presentation, "Research needs to work harder in the developing world context, and it turns out that outputs like policy briefs and blog posts are most useful to researchers in a non-academic context, people in government, and people who advise governments for instance."

This suggests that if the developing world were to abjure the assessment and publishing practices of the developed world, and develop new ways of incentivising researchers to produce and share research optimally it could make science work harder for it — to the benefit of all.

When I asked Willmers what still needs to be done by the OA movement she answered, "In order for knowledge to reach government, industry and civil society so that it can have an optimal effect in addressing development imperatives we need to move beyond the journal article as the sole prized artefact of knowledge production to a system that acknowledges and rewards a wide range of output genres."

Better system?

This does not necessarily mean abandoning the journal/article model. But we are again tempted to speculate about possible futures. Might we see a situation emerge in South Africa, for instance, where the traditional journal — organised and managed by commercial publishers — is challenged by a new-style repository-based publishing system owned and managed by universities themselves? This might be journal-based Gold OA, but OA that is "free to access and free to publish", rather than pay to publish. Or it could be something quite different.

As noted in the earlier Q&A with Babini, for instance, a number of the journals on AJOL — which is based on the open source software Open Journal Systems (OJS) developed by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP) — do not have their own web platforms, but manage the entire publication process, including peer review, directly on AJOL. It is easy to imagine a future in which the norm became one in which African research institutions published their own journals (or some other publication vehicle) using institutional repositories as the publishing platform. These might be aggregated by services like SciELO and AJOL, but they would be hosted, owned and controlled by the home institution.

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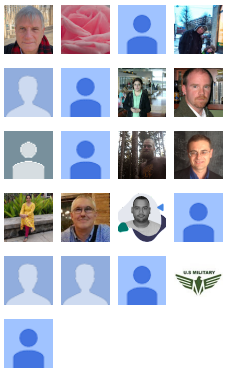

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And if that were to be combined with new assessment techniques it could perhaps lead to better research, and to research able to produce more beneficial solutions more quickly. It might even serve as an example for the developed world to follow. Already some researchers in the Global North have concluded that SciELO represents the first steps towards creating a better system.

Whether this happens will depend on choices that developing countries make today. For its part, China seems more interested in beating the developed world at its own game today, aggressively incentivising its researchers to publish in prestigious international journals — by, for instance, awarding cash bonuses to researchers who succeed in doing so.

Understandably, the temptation simply to emulate the developed world is high. But is it wise or logical? If the aim is primarily to cut a dash on the international stage, rather than produce useful research, then presumably not.

Right now, says Willmers, there is a tendency for the reward and incentives systems in research institutions "to serve a prestige agenda rather than relevance mission."

She adds, "There currently appears to be a disjunction between the values and the articulated mission of many institutions and the reward and incentive systems that govern the behaviour of academic communities: our values and mission speak to relevance, while we tend to only reward activity in the prestige realm (that is, the publication of journal articles in 'international' Impact Factor journals)."

Today, therefore, the developing could be said to be standing at a crossroads. It can try to compete with the developed world on terms set by the developed world, or it can set about creating a more effective system, and perhaps become a leader rather than a follower as a result.

The question developing countries might ask themselves is this: Should they seek to replicate what many now view as a dysfunctional scholarly communication system — where prestige is prioritised over relevance — or should they try to develop a new system, one that would incentivise scientists to produce research of benefit to mankind more effectively?

Challenges

Of course the latter approach is not without its challenges, and some risk. How, for instance, would quality be assured in any alternate system? After all, however flawed the IF-based journal hierarchy might be, it does at least attempt to incentivise quality, and some still believe that it does a "good enough" job.

The challenge would be all the greater if any alternative system was based on non-traditional publishing platforms — where peer review is not currently the norm.

But any risk needs to be set against the fact that the traditional journal, and the assessment practices that have grown around it, are not only flawed, but discriminate against researchers in the developing world — in so far as it is much harder to get a paper published in an international journal if you are based in the Global South.

The good news is that the OA movement has not only alerted the world to the growing access problem, but it has drawn attention to the serious inadequacies inherent in the current assessment system. And this has led a lot of discussion about the need to devise new measures of quality and impact — which in fact are much easier to implement in an online environment.

So, for instance, there is growing interest in post-publication peer review, and in a variety of techniques collectively known as altmetrics — including the use of sophisticated article download and citation tools, and new ways of aggregating commentary on social networking platforms like Twitter and web services like Wikipedia.

Willmers acknowledges that quality is a key issue. "We require serious exploratory engagement with how we conceive of and administer peer review outside of the formal journal or book publication process", she says below. "This entails a new approach to how we think about impact, and creates a strong

imperative for engaging with Altmetrics and other mechanisms for surfacing data on downstream content use."

The fundamental question, however, is whether the developing world can withstand the blandishments of international publishers any more effectively today that it showed itself capable of doing when Willmers watched in horror as South African journals sold themselves to commercial publishers, or indeed any more effectively than the developed world is still able to do.

It is worth noting that earlier this year Springer announced that it had signed a five-year agreement with Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) in order to give students, researchers and professionals at more than 400 institutions in Brazil access to Springer's paywalled content.

Clearly it is important that Brazilian researchers have access to international research. The danger of such deals, however, is that the local research community will end up being sucked into a system dominated by international commercial publishers, by the traditional journal system, and by the problematic IF-based incentive system.

Consider also what Sami Kassab, a Media Research analyst at the investment company Exane BNP Paribas, told me earlier in this Q&A series. "Despite the noise around OA, consortia are still signing long term subscriptions contracts with limited cancellation clauses. At the Frankfurt Book Fair last year, we heard of an Eastern European consortium signing a 7-year deal with a major publisher, more than the usual 3 to 5-year deals."

The continuing willingness of the developing world to enter into such Big Deals with large international publishers clearly opens up the possibility that these publishers (rather than the local research community) will end up setting the research agenda — much as it already does for the developed world.

Locked out

It is also against this background that we should view the recent news that SciELO's citation index is being incorporated into the Thomson Reuters Web of Science. In response to the news, OA advocate Jean-Claude Guédon commented, "The consequences of this move are twofold: much greater visibility, and presumably, prestige for SciELO journals, but also much greater vulnerability to the moves by international publishers interested in picking up potentially lucrative SciELO publications."

Finally, we could note that Open Access advocates have always argued that the Global South will be the greatest beneficiary of OA, since research institutions in developing countries are least able to afford the current subscription costs that scholarly publishers demand. But as international publishers start to embrace OA, and we see more and more research start to become freely available, there is a danger that the developing world find itself locked out anew.

Thus where currently researchers in the Global South are frequently locked out of access (by high subscription costs), in an OA publishing world dominated by international commercial publishers who charge thousands of dollars to publish a paper, they could find themselves locked out of the publication process (by article-processing charges). While they might have access to all the third-party research they want, they could find themselves unable to publish their own research.

(I acknowledge that some researchers in some developing countries can currently get an APC fee-waiver, but if author-pays OA publishing becomes prevalent I very much doubt that the waiver system will continue in its present form).

As Willmers puts it, "OA offers the developing world unprecedented access to knowledge. It is also brings with it the threat that unless we mobilise, invest and put systems in place to protect and support the creation, curation and profiling of local knowledge we stand to be subsumed in a deluge of knowledge from the North, further reinforcing global digital and participation divides."

All the more reason, one might argue, for the Global South to develop its own platforms for scholarly publishing, platforms that it owns and controls itself, and which can facilitate incentive systems more likely to generate valuable research.

Again, however, there is some good news to share: it might not have to do this on their own. As noted, more and more researchers in the developed world are becoming frustrated with the failings of the current system, and increasingly keen to — as Brembs puts it — "cut out the parasitic middle men".

Brembs believes the solution is to create a global library-based scholarly communication system outside the control of publishers. And, as also noted, he believes that services like SciELO should be viewed as a "stepping stone" for the better system he envisages.

The Q&A Begins

Q: When and why did you become an OA advocate?

A: I became an OA advocate around 2005 when I was working as a publishing manager with a South African journal publisher. We partnered with local professional societies and published 13 scholarly journals across a wide range of disciplinary areas, many of which were profiling excellent scholarship but at the time struggling to invent new business models and approaches to ensuring their ongoing survival.

As a publishing house we put extraordinary resources into building up a number of these titles, committing value-add after value-add in the publishing process, producing a high quality journal product that resulted in a number of these titles climbing ISI rankings and developing considerable community reputation.

The net result of this labour was to see international proprietary publishers drop their nets into local publishing waters and skim the cream of the South African crop, absorbing these local journals into large pay-walled collections, seducing often desperate editors with promises of international profile and financial lifelines, taking knowledge out of the country and then expecting to sell it back to us at a price very few of us could afford.

Something in this picture felt intrinsically wrong to me. It was perhaps less of a case of becoming an OA advocate than having a deep realisation that the local scholarly communication paradigm was broken. The conversation around how to first acknowledge and then address this led in the open access direction.

Q: What would you say have been the biggest achievements of the OA movement to date, and what have been the biggest disappointments?

A: Globally the recent government, research council and funder open access mandates stand out as a core achievement. There has been incredible progress in this area in the last three to five years.

Also, the expansion of open access principles beyond publication into the process of science, driving new approaches to sharing and collaborative knowledge creation, is very exciting. We are now in the era of open data, open science, open educational resources and open source technologies — 21st century scholarly communication.

It is hard to speak of disappointments. I am continually amazed by the achievements of small committed groups of individuals.

Q: There has always been a great deal of discussion (and disagreement) about the roles that Green and Gold OA should play. In the context of South Africa and the developing world, what would you say should be the respective roles of Green and Gold OA today?

A: I do not think that the tension between these two approaches exerts in South or Southern Africa in the same way that it does in the UK. We need both. In terms of operating as a paradigm for funds disbursement at national level I do not expect that it is transferable to our context. If we consider this model as a repository versus formal publisher approach we need to first consider what a different place we are in with respect to both publishing industry and institutional e-infrastructure development.

There is a strong argument for the Green route in our local context so that content can be accessible irrespective of where and how academics choose to publish, but this raises significant questions in terms of the institutional capacity and infrastructure development required.

The fixation with Green versus Gold at times seems to function as a distraction from the core challenges of our context — that is, (a) how do we start to build institutional capacity and mechanisms for regional collaboration so that we can capture, curate and share the knowledge that is being produced in our universities; and (b) how do we stimulate discussion at national level to address sustainable funding mechanisms and a strategic policy approach to scholarly communication. We need significant investment in both formal and institutional publishing efforts; both are to be supported.

Q: What about Hybrid OA?

A: This area feels precarious and difficult to navigate. I have the sense that there is an increasing amount of hybrid OA activity in the African higher education environment — and, as a result, an increasing amount of publisher double-dipping.

The absence of coordination and dedicated institutional capacity to engage strategically with where our academics are publishing and what we are paying for makes us particularly vulnerable to exploitative financial practice on the part of the publishing industry.

I expect the current headless chicken phase will be judged as expensive in the long run. That said, a number of local journals are exploring hybrid OA as a means to transition from closed to open business models and flexibility is key.

Q: How would you characterise the current state of OA in South Africa, and internationally?

A: OA in South Africa is just entering adolescence. It appears to now be commonplace and accepted in abstract, but faces the tough task of coming into its own and still needs to prove its worth as it progresses into implementable adulthood (i.e. uptake by the academic community).

The conversation has evolved significantly in the last three years — away from whether or not it is a good idea to how we make it work — and we now face the interesting challenge of operationalising and putting our policies into practice. This task cannot be addressed in isolation of the number of other large-scale challenges that limit access to knowledge in the African context and define the local higher education environment.

While recent developments in OA are encouraging, the challenges facing African higher education in terms of massification and global competition are sobering, and OA has a particular role to play in responding to the educational needs of the continent. We are at a crucial stage in terms of this potential being realised.

Internationally OA seems a little more evolved than the local context, particularly with regards to funding mechanisms and national/regional policy frameworks to govern activity and infrastructure development. I am however weary of generalisations, and expect that there are pockets of progress and resistance in all parts of the world.

Q: What still needs to be done, and by whom?

A: In order for knowledge to reach government, industry and civil society so that it can have an optimal effect in addressing development imperatives we need to move beyond the journal article as the sole prized artefact of knowledge production to a system that acknowledges and rewards a wide range of output genres.

There currently appears to be a disjunction between the values and the articulated mission of many institutions and the reward and incentive systems that govern the behaviour of academic communities: our values and mission speak to relevance, while we tend to only reward activity in the prestige realm (that is, the publication of journal articles in “international” Impact Factor journals).

Research conducted amongst Southern African academics in the Scholarly Communication in Africa Programme (SCAP) revealed that one of the greatest stumbling blocks to unlocking the potential of an expanded range of outputs was a concern around quality assurance — this particularly at a time when many African institutions are just beginning to develop a research agenda and establish an international reputation in the research arena.

We require serious exploratory engagement with how we conceive of and administer peer review outside of the formal journal or book publication process. This entails a new approach to how we think about impact, and creates a strong imperative for engaging with Altmetrics and other mechanisms for surfacing data on downstream content use.

In order to engage with these issues we require for institutions to acknowledge the role they have to play in curating and profiling their knowledge for development. This requires skills and capacity development, which requires government support.

If government is serious about seeing knowledge address development, it must commit resources and provide an enabling policy environment to support the communication and preservation of the knowledge that is being produced (both within and beyond academia).

Within this new framework it is crucial that we run pilot projects, experiment, and conduct research in order to understand what works in developing country environments.

We need to be able to make informed decisions around where investment should be directed and prospective solutions must be scoped in line with the affordances of the current system, bearing in mind the culture of the communities these systems are embedded in.

Q: What in your view is the single most important task that the OA movement should focus on today?

A: In the South and Southern African context the imperative appears to be for national-level and regional coordination with respect to policy and infrastructure development; this ideally to be accompanied by government-fed financial systems for supporting scholarly communication as a core component of national research and development.

There is significant activity at institutional level across the region, but the space often appears to be characterised by competitiveness that leads to duplication of effort and inefficiency. In order to scale we are going to need to pool resources and collaborate.

Internationally the imperative appears to be for the OA movement to continue the drive to expand beyond the journal article and in so doing engage in more concerted conversation with its cousins, open educational resources and open science.

I think we have reached a stage of evolution in these areas of activity where it behoves us to engage in meta-level consideration of how the various open knowledge endeavours link together and what an integrated future might look like. This is very exciting to consider.

Q: What does OA have to offer the developing world?

A: OA offers the developing world unprecedented access to knowledge. It is also brings with it the threat that unless we mobilise, invest and put systems in place to protect and support the creation, curation and profiling of local knowledge we stand to be subsumed in a deluge of knowledge from the North, further reinforcing global digital and participation divides.

Q: What are your expectations for OA over the next year?

A: I expect that in Africa we will see the increasing provision of high-speed bandwidth and the development of national research and education networks (NRENs) across the continent start to make a tangible difference in boosting African research capacity, stimulating scholarly communication activity, ramping up international collaboration, and pioneering new ways in which we share knowledge.

With this development will come increasing further realisation of OA as a key mechanism for the optimal functioning of these systems.

Internationally I expect OA journal publishing activity to continue to grow exponentially as mandates take effect and academic communities start seeing demonstrable benefit from investment in open systems.

Q: Will OA in your view be any less expensive than subscription publishing? If so, why/how? Does cost matter anyway?

A: Preliminary indications seem to suggest that OA will be significantly cheaper than subscription publishing — or at least that the cost to benefit ratio will far exceed that of closed access publishing in terms of promoting development and innovation.

In our local context it does however feel dangerous to conflate this with an assumption that less investment will be required. We want instead to argue for reallocation and boosting of current resources.

Significant ongoing investment is required in order to develop the skills, infrastructure and strategic approach to scholarly communication activity required to ensure our participation in global OA systems.

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Michelle was a senior team member in the Shuttleworth Foundation OER UCT Initiative and was the programme manager of the IDRC Scholarly Communication in Africa Programme (SCAP), a four-country research and publishing initiative aimed at increasing the visibility of African research. She is currently the project manager of the OpenUCT Initiative.

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Earlier contributors to this series include palaeontologist Mike Taylor, cognitive scientist Stevan Harnad, former librarian Fred Friend, SPARC director Heather Joseph, publishing consultant Joseph Esposito, de facto leader of the Open Access movement Peter Suber,Open Access Advocacy leader at the Latin American Council on Social Sciences (CLACSO) Dominique Babini, Cameron Neylon, advocacy director for the non-profit OA publisher Public Library of Science, and Philippe Terheggen, Managing Director, STM Journals at Elsevier.

The full list of those taking part in the series is here.

Posted by Richard Poynder at 11:08

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